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## A JAPANESE VILLAGE.

THE novel and interesting exhibition figuring under the above name at the Madison Square Garden is a veritable series of Japanese *tableaux vivants*. About fifty-two artists and artisans of various kinds, and a few women and children, are grouped in shops ranged around the large oblong room, each group engaged in a special employment. It seems at first as if, by some "Alice through the Looking-glass" arrangement, the hangings and embroideries which have latterly so provoked curiosity concerning these denizens of "The Land of the Rising Sun" had become vivified, and those curious people had stepped out bodily to continue their avocations in the face of our open-eyed wonder.

The shops are raised about eighteen inches above the floor, and are carpeted with the matting used upon their houses, each breadth being lined, bound and finished by itself. The workman, upon mounting this platform, leaves his wooden clog or straw sandal on the floor and seats himself, cross-legged, before the bench containing tools and materials. The first whom we approach is a dec-

shaped or placed alike, no two lines exactly regular or of the same curve. He hates monotony. His handwork always partakes of the qualities of the artist even when he is only an artisan, and his very ignorance of machinery serves him in good stead, making his dexterity as perfect as his eye for form, color and arrangement. If he never reaches the dignity of high or pictorial art, as a mere decorative artist he stands unique.

The next shop is occupied by a man using pigments equally dextrously in painting birds, flowers and rude but graphic bits of scenery. The most common of these are instinct with that very spirit of nature, which is more delicate and elusive than the dust on the butterfly's wing. The tapering, flexible fingers seem half prehensile with esthetic intuition quivering at their very tips.

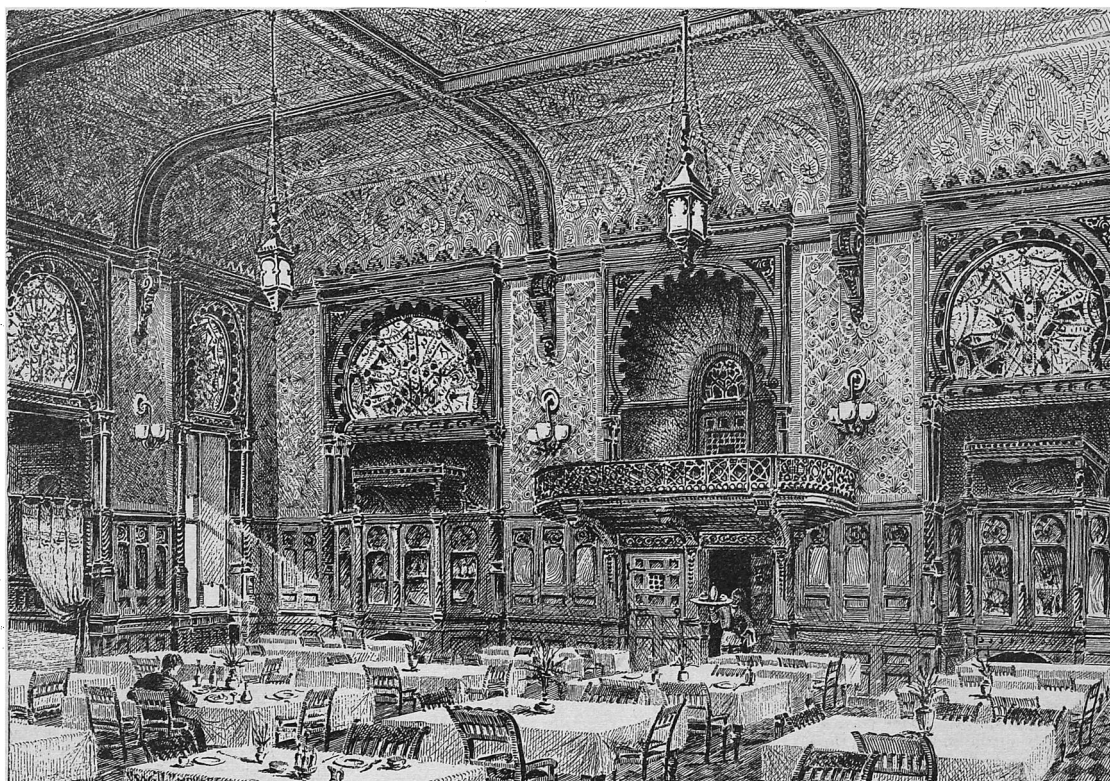
The manufacture of that Satsuma ware, which has long been the object of so much admiration, is one of the most interesting processes at the exhibition. To the observer the modeling seems, at times, not so skillful as at our own potteries, but the decoration of even one small piece would drive the nervous American workman into des-

filler, appears the finisher. The rough, unsightly article is handed to the polisher, under whose hands it slowly evolves a thing of substantial beauty.

The modeler in bronze is there at work upon his clay design, which, when complete, is covered with wax, whose surface is minutely finished to show the veining of the petal or the feather. Over this he again packs the clay with infinite care, filling, without marring, every crevice in the wax. When the clay is sufficiently hardened, the whole is heated till the wax is melted and has left the hollow space between the two walls of clay, which serves as the matrix for the molten bronze. Taken rough from the casting it is carved with tiny chisels and hammers, highly polished, and then colored, in parts, with various metallic hues.

The wood-carving of the Japanese village is an exhibition of intense realism springing out of the conventional or the grotesque. It cannot be regarded as national, since it is said to be the work of one man.

In embroidering, the textile fabric is fastened tight in a frame, before which sits the cross-legged workman. He holds the left hand constantly below



Dining-Room, West Hotel, Minneapolis

Designed by L. S. Buffington Archt  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Looking towards orchestra-balcony over "serving" entrance. Room, 96 feet long, 47 feet wide, 26 feet high, of a strictly moresque character. Floor of black and white marble. Wainscoting and all other wood finished, as well as all furniture, of Spanish mahogany, elaborately carved, and relieved by brass trimmings, railings, hanging (electric) lamps, &c., &c. Walls and ceiling appropriately frescoed. Windows of beveled-edge plate glass, with stained glass above transom. Designed by the architect of the building, L. S. Buffington, Minneapolis. Woodwork by the Whitting-Reynolds Co., Minneapolis. Marble by Brainerd Co., Joliet, Ill. Frescoing and stained glass by Herter Bros., N. Y.

orative artist, with his little bowls of water-paints, brushes and pads of paper. He seizes the latter, and, holding two brushes in his right hand—one between the thumb and the tightly-curved fingers, making a fist, the other between the little finger and that adjoining—rapidly draws the outline of a human eye with the eyebrow, then the nose, the facial lines, the hands and the kimono, or over-robe, all done more rapidly than this is written. The artist has drawn this upside down, so that the picture faces the spectator. It is remarkable how few and how vivid are the touches, not one too many, nor gone astray, nor feeble and undecided. With economy of effort, a turn here and a dash there, and the smaller brush used for delicate lines, the work is finished. Though an unpretentious sketch, it is really full of character and extremely decorative.

This, then, is the way in which those various hangings and devices are made, which so pique the curiosity of Western civilization. With the gay abandon of a child playing with familiar toys, he arranges natural forms into all sorts of new but conventionalized combinations. No two flowers are

peration. The fine clay, found only in one place in Japan, is subject to the patient and exquisite touch of the tiny tool and brush till the flower, or the form, is finished as delicately as a miniature painting. Nothing shows more perfectly the feminine grace of the Oriental artist.

The manufacture of Cloisonné, or Shippo ware, is even more noteworthy. Upon the copper vase or plaque, which forms the base of the article, is drawn the outline to be followed. The artisan takes his wire of copper or silver, and with a clip of the scissors and a pinch of the small tweezers here and a curl there, gives it just the length and curve required.

It is then fastened to the design by a strong cement; but when the outlines are wholly covered, fusing is necessary to weld them together. The shallow cavities between are then filled with enamel in different colors, the plaque being fused six times during the entire process. The secrets of the material and combinations of color entering into this enamel are confined to the foreman of the group of artists. After the coppersmith, the designer, the wire-worker, and the mixer and the

the material, to receive and return the needle sent by the right, which it does with surprising swiftness and accuracy. The silk is reeled in another booth by a combination of wheels turned by hand. It is also twisted by a similar process, six strands being needed for one embroidering thread.

It is impossible to note all the subtle ways in which the Japanese artisan and artist differ in technique from our own, or to note the various booths in which it is exhibited. A sense of humor amounting to grotesqueness, fidelity to the spirit of the thing imitated and delicacy of manipulation, carried into the smallest detail, mark these artists of "The Land of the Rising Sun—Great Japan."

THE Japanese would seem to have possessed the secret of imparting surprising permanence to the colors painted on silk, judging from two screens from Yeddo, 500 years old, illustrating ceremonies, amusements and customs, bearing, also, still distinctly, though tarnished, the name of the artist, the city, and the date.